

## The Healthcare Debate Continues

As we have seen in many recent national and local news stories, emotions are running high at health care town hall meetings. The government option has emerged as one of the most contentious elements of legislation taking shape in Congress. As I listen to each of you at town hall meetings throughout East Tennessee, it is constant reinforcement to continue fighting for your interests in Congress.

By reading the current health care legislation we have before us today in Congress and thinking about its potential impact, I know H.R. 3200 is bad medicine for this country and we should simply start over. It's becoming evident many Democrats feel the same way, as evidenced by a recent CNN news story in which Rep. Allen Boyd (D-FL) said that it would be an "excellent idea" to start over on health care. Congress has a real chance to work together — Democrats and Republicans alike — to create true health care reform for this nation that would not further increase our deficit, hurt small businesses or create a one-size-fits-all single-payer system.

Constituents all around the country are voicing their opinions in town hall meetings. As I have been saying, health care is not a Democrat issue or Republican issue, it is a people issue. I truly believe that reforms and improvements are needed, ranging from finding ways to provide coverage for the uninsured to cutting fraud and waste. However, the proposed legislation before us in Congress will squeeze private insurance companies out of business by forcing them to subsidize the cost of care for those on government-sponsored care, which will eventually result in a government-run system, similar to those in England or Canada. Because I know Americans have come to enjoy their ability to get the care they need, I just don't think a single-payer system will work in America, particularly because care is only given if it fits within a budget. That is not what we are all about.

In addition, there is a major cost concern that we're facing with a government-run health care plan. This week in the Wall Street Journal, John Mackey — the CEO of Whole Foods — expressed that "while health reform is needed, the last thing our country needs is a massive new health care entitlement that will create hundreds of billions of dollars of new unfunded deficits and move us much closer to a government takeover

of our health-care system.” I agree with him that we should work to achieve reforms by moving in the opposite direction—toward “less government control and more individual empowerment.”

#### Before

Congress adjourned for the August District Work Period, I accepted the President’s invitation to go over the health care bill “line-by-line.” At a health care press conference even the White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs confirmed that a meeting would be set between me and the President. To-date, I have not heard from the President’s office confirming a time and date to meet, despite my continual outreach to have this meeting. I am awaiting the confirmation, and look forward to discussing this important piece of legislation with the President.

#### Because

H.R. 3200 will ultimately affect every one of us, I am conducting several town hall meetings in East Tennessee to hear your concerns. Enclosed is a list of town hall meetings I will be conducting for the remainder of the District Work Period. I hope you can join me for these important town hall sessions.

#### \* Monday, August

24th in Washington County at 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. at Science Hill Campus Auditorium (old Liberty Bell campus) located at 131 Pactolas Road, Johnson City, Tennessee

#### \* Tuesday, August

25th in Cocke County at 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. at the Newport Grammar School located at 301 College Street, Newport, Tennessee

#### \* Wednesday,

August 26th in Johnson County from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the Heritage City Hall (2nd floor school board office building) located at 211 North Church Street, Mountain City, Tennessee

#### \* Thursday, August

27th in Carter County from 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. at the Carter County Courthouse located at 801 East Elk Avenue in Elizabethton, Tennessee

#### \* Thursday,

September 3rd in Sullivan County at 6:30 &ndash; 8:00 p.m. at Kingsport Center for Higher Education located at 300 West Market Street, Kingsport, Tennessee

Please feel free to contact my office if we can be of assistance to you or your family. You can contact my office by mail, email or phone.